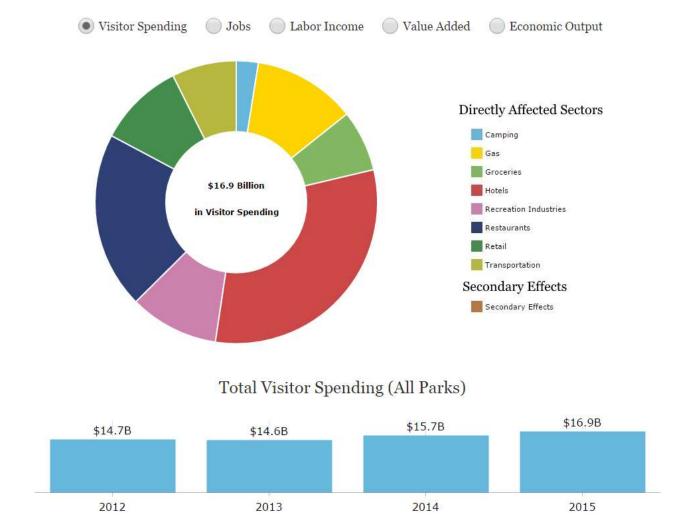
CONGRESSIONAL FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CENTENNIAL NEWSLETTER



May 2016

National Parks Economic Contributions to the National Economy

The National Park Service recently released a <u>report</u> showing that spending by a record number of national park visitors in 2015 provided a \$32 billion benefit to the nation's economy and supported 295,000 jobs.



This year's report includes easy-to-read, full color circle and bar graphs. Users can explore visitor spending, jobs, labor income, value added, and output effects by sector for national, state, and local economies. Users can also view year-by-year trend data. The interactive tool and report are available at the NPS Social Science Program webpage: go.nps.gov/vse.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 2016

This May we celebrate Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month. Check your local park for events or visit www.FindYourPark.com and search through the nationwide schedule. The Find Your Park calendar is continually being updated so keep checking back as new events are added every week.

MAY 15 – AUGUST 15

FIND YOUR SELFIE IN A PARK

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

CALIFORNIA

A SELFIE SCAVENGER HUNT IN ALL 11 PARKS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO AREA. A SERIES OF PHOTOS WILL BE POSTED WITH SOME WRITTEN CLUES OF AN AREA IN A PARK. PARTICIPANTS SUBMIT A SELFIE OF THEMSELVES IN THE LOCATION WHEN THEY FIND IT. PRIZES AND INCENTIVES FOR WINNERS.

www.nps.gov/goga

May 19-21

CHEQUAMEGON BAY BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE

WISCONSIN

BIRDING AND NATURE ACTIVITIES ON WISCONSIN'S SOUTH SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR AT THE PEAK OF SPRING MIGRATION.

WWW.BIRDANDNATUREFEST.COM

MAY 20

TOURISM CARES VOLUNTEER EVENT

MISSISSIPPI RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

MINNESOTA

PROFESSIONALS FROM THE TOURISM INDUSTRY WILL GATHER TO REMOVE INVASIVE SPECIES, PLANT UNDERSTORY PLANTS, AND HIKE THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

WWW.TOURISMCARES.ORG/MINNEAPOLIS

May 20-21

NATIONAL BIOBLITZ

Washington, DC

SEE PAGE 5 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

WWW.NPS.GOV/FINDAPARK/NATIONAL-PARK-WEEK

MAY 21

NATIONAL KIDS TO PARKS DAY

NATIONWIDE

A NATION-WIDE DAY OF OUTDOOR PLAY!

<u>www.parktrust.org/youthprograms/national-kids-</u> to-parks-day

MAY 21

MEMORIAL DAY NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

GUILFORD COURTHOUSE NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

NORTH CAROLINA

OVER 100 FIRST-GENERATION AMERICANS WILL ATTEND TO BECOME NEW CITIZENS.

www.nps.gov/guco

MAY 21

COMMUNITY LEADERS TOUR

Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park

VIRGINIA

A SPECIAL SATURDAY TOUR THAT ENGAGES COMMUNITY LEADERS ON THE ISSUES FACING THE PARK. A COMBINATION OF FUN AND IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS.

WWW.NPS.GOV/FRSP

FIND YOUR PARK

FINDYOURPARK.COM

Happy Birthday PSA from @NatlParkService & @GoParks

A new song celebrates the Centennial with sounds found in parks

Inspired by the diverse sights and sounds of national parks, the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation are proud to release a new series of public service announcements that express the number 100 using park images and sounds to serenade the National Park Service on its 100th birthday. Building on the momentum of the Find Your Park/ Encuentra Tu Parque movement, these creative pieces take a fresh look at the concept of "Find Your Park" using



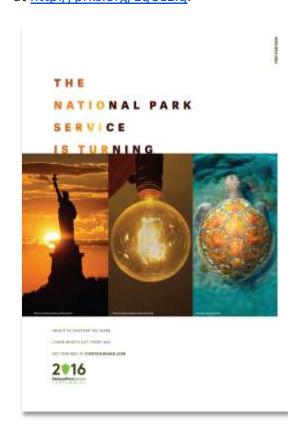
Click above to view the video or visit: https://youtu.be/U0-wdrG-uC0

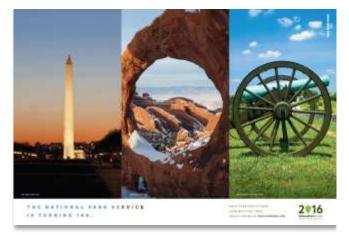
sound and design elements from some of America's more than 400 national parks.

From a whistling ranger to a hooting owl, the :30 and :15 second television spots embrace a variety of sounds found in national parks, edited together to create a celebratory "happy birthday" song. Beginning this past April, the spots are now airing as public service announcements.

The print versions create a visual"1-0-0" with objects found within national parks including images of natural, historical, and cultural treasures. These designs will be seen as print, digital banners, and other placements including bus shelters and billboards in cities across the country. Images can be downloaded

at http://prks.org/1qUz1lq.







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The Biodiversity Youth Ambassador Program

Conservation and empowerment for the future

By Kris Barnes, Biological Resources Division Liaison

The National Park Service initiated the Biodiversity Youth Ambassador Program (BYAP) to engage youth in science activities in national parks and local communities. The program was inspired by youth participating in BioBlitzes hosted by NPS and the National Geographic Society. A BioBlitz is an intensive biological inventory in which teams of students, teachers, families, and other community members work with taxonomic experts to identify as many species as possible in 24 hours. In conjunction with this event, there is a festival where participants take part in hands-on activities to learn about biodiversity, cultural connections to biodiversity, and conservation.



Ambassadors Valyssa, Caleb, and Lurleen share a smile at the 2015 BioBlitz at Hawai'l Volcanoes National Park.

For the past nine years, these events have taken place in various parks around the country. In 2010, NPS initiated the BYAP to continue on the momentum of these events and spread the word of biodiversity conservation. Currently, the NPS has a team of eight ambassadors (ages 10-25) from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Texas, Louisiana, and the District of Columbia. This geographical distribution allows them to work with people with diverse cultural and ecological backgrounds on issues of mutual interest such as biodiversity conservation and empowerment of the next generation – their generation. The diverse age range promotes mentorship within the program. Each ambassador has successfully advanced the mission of the program in unique and profound ways. Highlights from their continued efforts include:

- Establishing Biodiversity Friends Clubs at elementary and middle schools;
- Organizing local BioBlitzes on school grounds or at nearby natural areas;
- Giving presentations to classmates, organizing assemblies, or posting flyers about biodiversity;
- Organizing biodiversity-themed learning activities and field trips for youth programs;
- Coordinating youth-powered ecological clean-up and restoration efforts for fragile ecosystems;
- Initiating creation of pollinator gardens at elementary schools, high schools, and college campuses with local students;
- Designing interpretative programs for park visitors highlighting park ecology and biodiversity; and
- Creating and distributing outreach materials promoting pollinator conservation including over 6,000 packets of Burpee Pollinator Seed packets.

The 10th annual BioBlitz will take place in Washington, D.C. on May 20-21, 2016. The NPS is hosting a two-day workshop preceding the BioBlitz where the youth ambassadors will present their projects, develop leadership and communication skills, and organize a conservation effort with soldiers from the Wounded Warriors Project. To celebrate all the work the ambassadors have done and their continued work past the program, the NPS will be hosting a final celebration, with the help of Senator Mazie Hirono of Hawaii and her staff, at the United States Botanic Garden.

To learn more about the ambassadors and their work please visit the NPS Biodiversity webpage at https://www.nps.gov/subjects/biodiversity/meet-the-biodiversity-youth-ambassadors.htm.

Centennial Event of the Month

Each month this section highlights a park or program Centennial event. Centennial events can be small and intimate, such as a kids program in the local community, or grand, such as a concert or a naturalization ceremony. Either way, the options are endless with more events being added to the calendar every day. Check the Find Your Park website calendar or your Jocal park calendar for events near you.

The National BioBlitz 2016: Washington, D.C.



Grab your magnifying glass and Metro card and explore the wilds in and around Washington, D.C. On May 20-21, parks across Greater Washington will participate in the National Parks BioBlitz. BioBlitz is a fun, fast-paced biological survey of a park's creepers and crawlers, plants and pollinators, mammals and more. The National Park Service is celebrating its 100th birthday with more than one hundred BioBlitzes across the country.

National Parks BioBlitz—Washington, D.C., is the cornerstone event for the 2016 National Parks BioBlitz. During this free, two-day event, teams of scientists, naturalists, students, and volunteers will discover and document living creatures of national parks in and arounds the nation's capital. From early morning birding adventures on Theodore Roosevelt Island to pollinator surveys in Piscataway Park, from fish counts in Rock Creek Park to spider surveys at Dyke Marsh, and honeybee observations at Manassas National Battlefield Park, the event promises something for everyone. You can sign up for a BioBlitz survey at http://www.natgeo.org/bioblitz-dc.

As part of the National Parks BioBlitz, a two-day Biodiversity Festival will be held on the National Mall at Constitution Gardens. The family-friendly festival will feature hands-on science exhibits, entertainment, art, and food. Constitution Gardens will also serve as base camp for the BioBlitz and a virtual connection to more than one hundred biodiversity events taking place at national parks across the country.

The festival will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a special evening of science fun planned for Friday night. Explorers of all ages are needed. All events are free and open to the public; however, advance online registration is required to secure a spot on a BioBlitz inventory team. The Biodiversity Festival does not require advance registration. Whether you have a couple of hours or a full day, there are activities to engage the whole family. To learn more about the National Parks BioBlitz-Washington D.C. and activities throughout the national capital region and beyond to www.nationalgeographic.com/bioblitz or call (800) 638-6400 ext. 6186. To find a BioBlitz near you visit www.nps.gov/subjects/biodiversity/national-parks-bioblitz.htm.

Chickasaw and Choctaw Students on the Natchez Trace Parkway Connecting the present with the past

By Jane Farmer, Park Ranger, Natchez Trace Parkway

The purpose of the students' travel was educational, but their experiences reached far beyond academic. For the past three years, the Natchez Trace Parkway has invited groups of Chickasaw and Choctaw students from Oklahoma to visit their ancestral homelands. Running through Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, the Parkway transects the lands once occupied by ancestors of the students, and like many American Indian tribes, the majority of the Choctaw and Chickasaw people were removed from their ancestral homes to Oklahoma during the 1830s.

The students have mainly come from two Oklahoma universities: the Chickasaw Nation's students from East Central University and the students with mostly Choctaw heritages from the Native American studies program at Southeastern Oklahoma University.

The main emphasis of the project was to help students connect with their ancestral homelands and to more effectively develop educational resources for the parkway. University professors and tribal elders mentored the students, assisting in the production of their lesson plans, articles, and videos which focused on the relationship of the Chickasaw and Choctaw people to the Parkway.



Choctaw students on a boardwalk trail at Cypress Swamp.

For many of the students, the trip was their first visit to their homeland. Each student group was unique and their experiences varied slightly, although their routes all centered along portions of the parkway. Students had the opportunity to walk on original sections of the Old Trace, possibly on the same exact trails as an ancestor may have trod. They visited old village sites and ancient mounds now protected by the parkway. Some visited nearby ridges where Chickasaw families once thrived. Others peered into a cave, which is important to the creation story of their people. Sometimes the students just took time to enjoy chowing down on local nationally famous burgers.

Experiencing their homelands in person has connected students to their heritages in ways exclusive to first-hand experiences. One group came face to face with the early 1800s transfer of lands deed with Tishomingo's mark. Tishomingo is known as one of the great Mississippi Chickasaw leaders during the time of the Indian Removal. One student said, "Words cannot describe how amazing it was to see his actual mark. It was an emotional experience..."

One of the favorite student stops is within a stone's

Chickasaw and Choctaw continued from page 6

throw of the parkway. It is Te-Lah-Nay's wall, a hand-built rock wall commemorating the builder's great-grandmother. In the 1830s, an eighteen-year old Yuchi woman was removed to Oklahoma. She did not want to live there, so she walked home alone to Alabama. Each stone in the wall represents one of her footsteps home. The privately owned wall is a pilgrimage destination for many American Indians.

The materials developed by the students are shared with teachers and are posted digitally on the parkway's NPS website. The lessons developed by the Chickasaw students are also shared on that nation's website. In all, the educational materials developed by the students will be available to learners all over the world for years to come.

The National Park Service centennial year will be the final year of this project. Hopefully, the connections the students have made will become stronger and multiply during their lifetimes, ultimately enabling them to be even more effective keepers of their tribal stories.

For more information check out the kids videos at *Protecting What is Sacred, and Choctaw Traditional Dances* https://www.nps.gov/natr/learn/photosmultimedia/videos.htm, or the lesson plans at https://www.nps.gov/natr/learn/education/classrooms/curriculummaterials.htm.

Japanese-American Confinement Sites Grant Program

Japanese Americans during World War II



Photos courtesy of the Bancroft Library, university of California, Berkeley

Congress established the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant program in 2006 for the preservation and interpretation of U.S. confinement sites where Japanese Americans were detained during World War II. The law authorized up to \$38 million for the life of the grant program to identify, research, evaluate, interpret, protect, restore, repair, and acquire historic confinement sites in order that present and future generations may learn and gain inspiration from these sites and that these sites will demonstrate the nation's commitment to equal justice under the law.

Historic confinement sites include Gila River (AZ), Granada (CO), Heart Mountain (WY), Jerome (AR), Manazar (CA), Minidoka (ID), Poston (AZ), Rohwer (AR), Topaz (UT), and Tule Lake (CA).

Grants are awarded to organizations and entities working to preserve historic Japanese American confinement sites and their histories, are evaluated through a competitive process, and require a 2:1 Federal to non-Federal match.

To see summaries of previous grant projects visit http://www.nps.gov/jacs/projects.html.

Economy continued from page 1

Visitor spending 2015 295,000 supported jobs, provided \$11.1 billion in labor income, \$18.4 billion in value added, and \$32.0 billion in economic output to the U.S. economy. The lodging sector provided the highest direct contributions with \$5.2 billion in economic output gateway economies and 52,000 jobs. The restaurants and bars sector provided the next greatest



direct contributions with \$3.4 billion in economic output to local gateway economies and 65,000 jobs. Gas and oil followed with \$2 billion in economic output. And finally, admissions, fees, as well as souvenirs and other expenses both contributed \$1.7 billion.

The annual, peer-reviewed economics report, 2015 National Park Visitor Spending Effects, was prepared by economists Catherine Cullinane Thomas of the U.S. Geological Survey and Lynne Koontz of the National Park Service. It includes information by park and by state on visitor spending, the number of jobs supported by visitor spending, and other statistics.

National Park visitation is expected to grow again in 2016, because of the centennial. There are now 411 parks in the national park system; the latest is the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in Washington D.C.

President Obama established a Centennial Initiative for the NPS anniversary and Congress is considering a <u>centennial act</u> to support a multi-year effort to invest wisely in the park system's most important assets, use parks to enhance informal learning, engage volunteers, provide training opportunities for youth, and enhance the NPS's ability to leverage partnerships to accomplish its mission.

For more state-by-state information about national parks and how the National Park Service is working with communities, go to http://www.nps.gov/statename], for example: http://www.nps.gov/virginia.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Who else is a Congressional Friend of the National Park Service Centennial? You can find a full list of Friends on the <u>NPS Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs</u> and the <u>NPS Centennial</u> websites. Know a colleague who may be interested? See our contact below:

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